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Promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its resolution 57/261, on promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development, the General Assembly called upon the United Nations system and the international community to assist Caribbean countries and their regional organizations in their efforts to ensure the protection of the Caribbean Sea from degradation as a result of pollution from ships; and called upon the international community to support the efforts of the Working Group of Experts on the Caribbean Sea Initiative of the Association of Caribbean States, and invited the Association to submit a report on its progress to the Secretary-General for consideration during the fifty-ninth session of the Assembly.

The present report is submitted in response to resolution 57/261 and contains a report on the outcome of the Working Group of Experts (see annex).

The present report demonstrates the wide range of meaningful activities that are being implemented within the scope of the mandate of resolution 57/261 with a view to promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development. The value of a collaborative approach to the management and protection of the shared resources of the Caribbean Sea is also underscored.

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Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–4	3
II.	Activities undertaken at the national and regional levels	5–25	4
	A. Regional activities	5–19	4
	B. National activities	20–25	7
III.	Conclusions and recommendations	26–27	8
Annex			
	Report of the Association of Caribbean States		9

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 57/261 of 20 December 2002, entitled "Promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development", the General Assembly called upon States to continue to prioritize action on marine pollution from land-based sources as part of their national sustainable development strategies and programmes, in an integrated and inclusive manner, and also called upon them to advance the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (A/51/116, annex II) and the Montreal Declaration on the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (E/CN.17/2002/PC.2/15, annex, sect. 1); called upon the United Nations system and the international community to assist, as appropriate, Caribbean countries and their regional organizations in their efforts to ensure the protection of the Caribbean Sea from degradation as a result of pollution from ships, in particular through the illegal release of oil and other harmful substances, and from illegal dumping or accidental release of hazardous waste, including radioactive materials, nuclear waste and dangerous chemicals, in violation of relevant international rules and standards; called upon the international community to support the efforts of the Working Group of Experts on the Caribbean Sea Initiative of the Association of Caribbean States, and invited the Association to submit a report on its progress to the Secretary-General for consideration during the fifty-ninth session of the Assembly; and requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-ninth session, under the sub-item entitled "Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" of the item entitled "Environment and sustainable development", on the implementation of the resolution, taking into account the views expressed by relevant regional organizations.

2. Pursuant to resolution 57/261, entities of the United Nations system and relevant regional organizations were invited to submit updated accounts of activities undertaken in accordance with resolution 57/261 and the present report includes information received from those bodies as well as information on activities undertaken at the national level by Member States. The following Member States and organizations reported on activities undertaken in implementation of resolution 57/261: Colombia, Jamaica, Mexico, Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; the Association of Caribbean States, the Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) regional offices in the Caribbean, the United Nations Environment Programme and its Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

3. An integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development embraces interdisciplinary environmental, social and economic, as well as legal and institutional elements that must be combined in a strategy for the effective management and protection of the marine resources of the Caribbean. Such management, to be effective, must necessarily be pursued at both the national and the regional level, with particular regard to environmental and safety aspects of shipping; pollution monitoring and assessment, control of pollution from land-based resources, development of common methodologies for integrated

coastal management; conservation of biological diversity; exploitation of fisheries and other marine resources; exploitation of non-living resources; information and data exchange; security; and international and regional cooperation and coordination.

4. An account of the activities undertaken with a view to adopting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea during the period under review is given below.

II. Activities undertaken at the national and regional levels

A. Regional activities

5. The Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the organization charged by the member States of the wider Caribbean region with overall responsibility for implementation of the Caribbean Sea initiative, convened the first meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on the Caribbean Sea in Trinidad and Tobago on 26 May 2003 to review the status of and make recommendations for advancing the proposal for securing international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development. The meeting held wide-ranging discussions on the completed and ongoing scientific, technical and legal work and strategy necessary to advance the continuing interest of ACS member States to have the Caribbean Sea designated a special area in the context of sustainable development. The report of the Technical Advisory Group, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/261, is attached (see annex).

6. The Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean of ECLAC, which collaborates with ACS in advancing the Caribbean Sea initiative, prepared two major studies in support of the further development of a Caribbean Sea proposal. Those studies sought respectively to identify and review existing regional and international conventions and other instruments that are relevant to the further development of the Caribbean Sea proposal and to conduct a review of existing regional approaches to ocean and coastal zone management.

7. The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat also presented to its member States at the twentieth session of CDCC, held in St. Croix in April 2004, a document entitled "Recent developments in relation to the proposal for securing the international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development", which reviewed the institutional aspects of the process involved in promoting the proposal. Existing approaches to marine regionalism were also reviewed and the overall technical, legal and political feasibility of the proposal demonstrated. In addition, an evaluation of progress in the development and promotion of the proposal was also undertaken and a number of lessons learned were compiled.

8. UNEP continues to work closely with the ACS secretariat to strengthen the technical basis for promoting support for the proposal to have the Caribbean Sea internationally recognized as a special area in the context of sustainable development, as well as for the implementation of the requisite programme. In addition, UNEP is working with the secretariat of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the University of the West Indies on the *Caribbean Environment*

Outlook, another key document helping define Caribbean priorities and technical inputs for work on the Caribbean Sea as a special area.

9. UNDP is assisting many Caribbean countries in creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[1] the Convention on Biological Diversity[2] and Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. It is currently supporting 14 Caribbean countries in the preparation of their national biodiversity strategies (3.5 million United States dollars), 14 countries in the preparation of their national communications under the Convention on Climate Change ($2.8 million) and 6 countries in the preparation of their Stockholm Convention national implementation plans ($2.4 million).

10. In collaboration with the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, UNDP is currently assisting the Governments of States members of that organization in becoming parties to the relevant conventions and protocols and in meeting their commitments under those instruments. It has also provided support in accessing financial resources: funding was provided to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago from the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer for the phasing out of ozone-depleting gases under the Montreal Protocol in the sum of over 748,000 United States dollars. The country will phase out the use of ozone-depleting gases within the next four years. Countries such as Cuba have accessed over $1 million in keeping with their commitments under the Protocol. UNDP has also facilitated funding under the Convention on Climate Change and the Stockholm Convention from the Global Environment Facility for enabling activities.

11. In Barbados, UNDP is involved in the identification of innovative financing mechanisms for sustainable development. Some countries in the region, including Dominica, are interested in using debt swaps to generate funds for use in supporting environmental policy and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. This is an ongoing initiative that is in its early stage, but if successful could provide an important source of income to support environmental and development initiatives.

12. In partnership with UNEP, the secretariat of the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region[3] and the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute, UNDP is carrying out a $13 million project entitled "Integrating watershed and coastal area management in the small island States of the Caribbean", which will assist Governments in reforming their laws, policies and institutions towards more integrated approaches to river and coastal area management. It features nine national demonstrations, which will pilot and promote replication of specific on-the-ground integrated management strategies and approaches. Colombia and Jamaica reported active participation in the project.

13. In addition, UNDP is collaborating with UNESCO in the development of a major Global Environment Facility international waters project aimed at sustainable management of the Caribbean Sea's shared living marine resources that will help countries of the region meet the target for sustainable fisheries set by the World Summit on Sustainable Development.[4] The project will assist countries in making needed legal, policy and institutional reforms for sustainable management of Caribbean large marine ecosystem shared resources; the full project is expected to cost $9 million.

14. During the period under review, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC), through its regional subsidiary body, the IOC Subcommission for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions, contributed to the development of human resources and technical and scientific capacity in the member States of the region, with emphasis on the implementation of an ocean observation system for the wider Caribbean. To that end a steering committee, with wide membership among the member States of the Caribbean, was established in March 2003. A series of scientific conferences was held, most recently in the United States Virgin Islands in February 2004, to plan a Caribbean Sea/Gulf of Mexico ocean modelling programme.

15. IOC also promotes an integrated coastal management cooperation project in Latin America and the Caribbean. Launched in October 2003, the project focuses on governance, science and technology for management and capacity-building for enhanced integrated coastal management in the region. UNESCO has also established an Ocean Data Information Network for IOCARIBE and South America (ODINCARSA), as a mechanism to assess the state of development of national data centres and to support capacity-building in the area.

16. The United States-sponsored White Water to Blue Water Partnership continues to focus on cross-sectoral management of watershed and marine resources in the region through capacity-building at the national and regional levels to implement the many conventions and protocols negotiated since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992.[5] In March 2004, its Steering Committee, in collaboration with CARICOM and UNEP, organized in Miami a week-long conference and training to facilitate partnerships, exchange best practices and encourage innovation.

17. The United Kingdom is also actively participating in the White Water to Blue Water Partnership initiative. In that connection, the United Kingdom sponsored a workshop on sustainable tourism aimed at helping to build the capacity of its overseas territories and key tourism destination countries in the region. An ongoing land-water interface programme sponsored by the Department for International Development, which also seeks to promote integrated watershed and coastal zone management, including the amelioration of pollution, in the Caribbean Islands, was also presented at the conference in Miami in conjunction with work being pursued with other partners, including the University of the West Indies.

18. During the conference in Miami, new partnerships were also conceptualized around proposals for support from the International Maritime Organization for the possible establishment of no-anchoring areas. Several small island developing States indicated that they were experiencing damage from anchors, including Aruba, the Bahamas, Barbados and Grenada. The International Council of Cruise Lines and Conservation International announced a partnership worth $1.1 million for achieving environmentally friendly cruise operations in biodiversity hotspots, including the wider Caribbean region.

19. IOC, the UNEP Regional Coordinating Unit and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency also launched a partnership, the Regional Network in Marine Science and Technology for the Caribbean: the Know-Why Network, during the White Water to Blue Water Partnership conference, with a view to developing regional capacity in marine scientific research and the transfer of marine technology.

B. National activities

20. The Government of Colombia reported a number of initiatives associated with the implementation of resolution 57/261. A National Committee for Integrated Management of Ocean Spaces and Coastal Zones (CNMIZC), an inter-ministerial body, was established by the Colombian Commission for the Ocean and the Ministry of the Environment, Human Settlements and Territorial Development in 2003. In 2004, the Government of Colombia also implemented the National System for the Integrated Management of Ocean Spaces and Coastal Zones in accordance with the guidelines of its National Ocean and Coastal Spaces Policy. Colombia is currently implementing four projects on integrated coastal zone management, addressing such issues as the development of indicators for integrated coastal zone management, the targeting of local authorities and the development of methodologies for the utilization of live marine resources.

21. In addition to wide participation in regional activities associated with the Caribbean Sea initiative, the Government of Jamaica is engaged in an ongoing effort to develop various policies, action plans and related mechanisms and legislation intended specifically for the protection and preservation of the marine environment. These include a National Policy on Ocean and Coastal Zone Management; a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan; a National Parks System Plan, including marine parks; a Watershed Policy; Environmental Management Systems; and an Underwater Cable and Pipelines Policy. Several senior inter-agency advisory bodies have been established to enhance the country's integrated approach to marine and coastal issues. Jamaica has also embarked on the development of a National Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Sources and Activities of Pollution. This should be finalized by September 2004.

22. The Government of Mexico participates actively in the ACS Transport Group and is preparing to implement the 2002 amendments to the annex to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code in order to prevent illegal activity in waters under its national jurisdiction, mainly in the Bay of Campeche. The amendments will enter into force on 1 July 2004.

23. Mexico undertakes routine inspection of ships that transport hazardous wastes in the Gulf of Mexico and throughout the Caribbean and also offers support for the management of fisheries in Mexican and Caribbean waters and for the promotion and strengthening of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism. Mexico participates in the Mesoamerica Coral Reef Corridor Initiative through the National Commission for Protected Natural Areas (CONANP) and has developed a strategy for the protection of fragile ecosystems in its Caribbean zone. Mexico has also established the Agenda del Mar, a high-level inter-institutional coordinating mechanism whose objective is to coordinate federal policy on conservation and sustainable use of the waters under Mexican jurisdiction.

24. During the period under review, the Government of Norway provided support to Barbados, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Jamaica in the areas of good governance, health and education, environment and energy, economic development and aid relief.

25. The United Kingdom sponsored a workshop on climate change in Havana in September 2003, intended to facilitate the production of climate change scenarios for two projects, one on the adaptation to climate change in the Caribbean and a project funded by the Global Environment Facility on capacity-building for stage II adaptation to climate change in Cuba, Mexico and Central America. The Government of the United Kingdom indicated its resolve to continue to provide advance information on shipments of nuclear materials through the Caribbean, recognizing that the safe transit of nuclear waste is an important issue for States of the Caribbean region. Emphasis was placed on the importance of maintaining dialogue and consultation aimed at improving mutual understanding, confidence-building and enhanced communication in ensuring safe maritime transport of radioactive materials, in particular for emergency preparedness. The United Kingdom noted that its first report demonstrating compliance with the provisions of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, to which it is party, was issued in May 2003.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

26. **The contributions received from Member States and organizations in connection with the preparation of the present report demonstrate the wide range of meaningful activities that are being carried out pursuant to resolution 57/261 with a view to promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea in the context of sustainable development. The value of a collaborative approach to the management and protection of the shared resources of the Caribbean Sea is also underscored. There is therefore much to be gained from the fullest implementation of the resolution by all Member States and relevant organizations. More active participation and reporting is therefore strongly encouraged.**

27. **It should also be noted that there is continued interest and resolve on the part of the Member States of the wider Caribbean area, as reflected in the mandates given to the pertinent regional organizations, to pursue the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development. This is reflected in the report of the Technical Advisory Group of ACS (see annex). How that interest can be accommodated is still a matter to be addressed.**

Notes

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[2] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1506, No. 25974.

[4] See *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum).

[5] See *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions*.

Annex

Report of the Association of Caribbean States[a]

[Original: Spanish]

Introduction

The General Assembly resolution entitled "Promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development"[b] calls upon the international community *to support the efforts of the Working Group of Experts on the Caribbean Sea Initiative of the Association of Caribbean States to further implement resolution 55/203, and invites the Association to submit a report on its progress to the Secretary-General for consideration during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly.*

In response to that invitation from the supreme organ of the world body, in which the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) has observer status and all its members are represented, the ACS secretariat has the honour to submit the present report, despite the fact that the objectives of General Assembly resolutions 55/203 and 57/261 differ considerably from the proposal on which they were based, since they do not appear to represent the concept, potential scope and objectives as they were proposed. From the operational viewpoint, as reflected in the very titles of the resolutions, the latter propose a clearly resource management-oriented approach which places the burden of maintaining the integrity of the Caribbean upon those least able to bear it.

The proposal to promote "an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development", which is once again before the General Assembly during this fifty-ninth session, is derived from a decision adopted at the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDSPOA), held in Barbados from 10 to 14 November 1997.

The original proposal formulated by that Ministerial Meeting was to secure international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development, recognizing that article 57 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea placed large areas of ocean under the jurisdiction of coastal States.

While this means that many members of ACS, particularly small island States, now have areas of sea under their jurisdiction which are many times larger than their land surface, at the same time it makes them the guardians of areas for which they lack the necessary financial, human and institutional resources in terms of

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[a] The member States of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) are Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela. Its Associate Members are Aruba, France on behalf of French Guiana, Guadeloupe and Martinique, and the Netherlands Antilles. Eight non-self-governing territories are also eligible for membership. The Internet address of ACS is www.acs-aec.org.

[b] A/RES/57/261.

safeguarding their rights and exercising jurisdiction and of making sustainable use of the corresponding resources. These challenges, insurmountable at the unilateral level, have led the ACS member States to seek a multilateral framework which would enable them to deal with their new rights and obligations towards the shared heritage which the Caribbean Sea represents for the countries of the region.

When the element of recognition of the special area as put forward in the original proposal was lost, this also led to the loss, at least in the operative part of the resolutions, of the recognition by the international community that the Caribbean Sea is a fragile ecosystem shared among many countries and territories whose size, population and level of economic development vary widely and which are more or less dependent on the sea for their economic development, and that in preserving that heritage, the countries of the Greater Caribbean are hampered by limited resources at the economic, social, legal, institutional, environmental and other levels.

Technical Advisory Group

At the third summit, the representatives of the member States and associate members of ACS, inter alia, reiterated in paragraph 24 of the Declaration of Margarita the great political importance of the original proposal:

> "Recognising the Caribbean Sea as the common patrimony of the region, and an invaluable asset for which we give special priority to its preservation, we urge our countries to take fully into account the elements of the Resolution "Promoting an Integrated Management Approach to the Caribbean Sea Area in the context of Sustainable Development" (A/RES/55/203), approved by the 55th Session of the UN General Assembly, and to continue taking steps for the Caribbean Sea to be recognised by the international community as a Special Area in the context of Sustainable Development."

Following the nineteenth meeting of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), held at Port of Spain on 14-15 March 2002, the Director of the Subregional Headquarters met with the Secretary General of ACS on 25 March 2002 in order to propose that ECLAC/CDCC and ACS should work from their respective strong points and within their areas of competence, in implementing resolution 55/203 in the interests of international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development. In that regard, ECLAC/CDCC would play a technical role and ACS would maintain its political leadership.

Subsequently, the eighth meeting of the ACS Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism, held in Port of Spain on 4-5 April 2002, took the following measures, inter alia:

- It agreed in principle with the ECLAC/CDCC proposal, provided that the entire membership of ACS was recognized in the ECLAC/CDCC plan of action, and that concrete recommendations for political support should be submitted for consideration by the ACS Ministerial Council;
- It requested the ACS secretariat to inform the sixth intersessional preparatory meeting of the Ministerial Council concerning the joint actions undertaken by ECLAC/CDCC to move forward with the implementation of resolution 55/203

in pursuit of international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development. The ACS presented its report to the sixth intersessional preparatory meeting, reiterating the need for ACS to maintain its political leadership to ensure that the Caribbean Sea was recognized as a special area in the context of sustainable development, and urged all member States and associate members to undertake to contribute technical resources and show political will to move the process forward.

- The Secretary General took part in informal consultations among the aforementioned parties, held on 9 September at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bridgetown, Barbados. The consultations led to agreement on the procedure to be followed in order to convene a group of technical experts to produce recommendations on the presentation of the proposal.

In accordance with its terms of reference, the Technical Advisory Group on the Caribbean Sea Initiative, as it is currently known, is required to support ACS and ECLAC in the review and assessment of the quality of existing technical data, in relation with the proposal to secure international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development. The Group will also support ACS and ECLAC in identifying any gaps which may exist in terms of knowledge and information and which might, if they were not remedied, endanger the successful adoption of an appropriate resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The Technical Advisory Group was also entrusted with helping to prepare technical guidelines, and/or terms of reference for engaging the services of consultants, to fill any gaps in terms of knowledge and information which may be agreed upon, and formulating recommendations for ACS and ECLAC, when requested, on the ability of consultants who are being considered to provide the required services in order to carry out the work of the Caribbean Sea Initiative. The Group will also act as a collegial critic (that is, it will ensure quality and quality control) in relation to the results of work commissioned by ACS and ECLAC in respect of the Caribbean Sea Initiative.

In that context, the Technical Advisory Group will advise ACS and ECLAC on the most appropriate and effective means of presentation ("packages") for technical data to be used in support of the Caribbean Sea resolution and, when required, will act as technical adviser to ACS and ECLAC or their members, in regional or international forums, in relation to the Caribbean Sea Initiative.

First meeting of the Technical Advisory Group

The first meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on the Caribbean Sea was held on 26 May 2003 at the ACS secretariat in Port of Spain.

The objective of the meeting was to review the state of the proposal and make recommendations to carry it forward with a view to achieving international recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development and the implementation of General Assembly resolution 57/261, entitled "Promoting an integrated management approach to the Caribbean Sea area in the context of sustainable development".

Present at the meeting were representatives of the following bodies: the Caribbean Industrial Research Institute (CARIRI), the Assessment of the Caribbean

Sea (CARSEA), the Caribbean Subregional Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA), the Sub-Commission of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (IOCARIBE), the Ministry of Physical Development and Environment of Barbados, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Coordinating Unit for Caribbean Environment Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNEP/ROLAC) and the Centro de Ecología, Pesquerías y Oceanografía del Golfo de México (Centre for Ecology, Fisheries and Oceanography of the Gulf of Mexico) (EPOMEX), in addition to experts attending in their personal capacities.

The meeting dealt with various aspects of scientific, technical and legal efforts, completed or in progress, designed to move the process forward, and with general principles of strategy and political work which are necessary in order to progress further.

It was agreed that, while maintaining the general perspective of sustainable development in pursuit of moving the proposal forward and the need to define more clearly the concept of a "special area in the context of sustainable development", efforts will be made to explore possible forums, instruments and mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels which may also be of assistance, including a review of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL Convention) and options in the context of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Caribbean Environment Programme (CEP), the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

To that end, ACS and ECLAC will facilitate the analysis of the studies commissioned by ECLAC and conducted by Professor Ralph Carnegie and Mr. Derrick Oderson, respectively: one on existing regional and international conventions and other instruments relevant, inter alia, to the management and conservation of the marine and coastal ecosystems of the Caribbean and the preservation of their resources, and the other on existing regional approaches to the management of coastal and oceanic areas.

The Technical Advisory Group agreed to explore areas for cooperation with agencies of the United Nations system such as UNEP and IOCARIBE, including UNEP programmes such as the Regional Seas Programme and the Caribbean Environment Outlook, and other relevant regional programmes and mechanisms.

In future, the Technical Advisory Group will also develop a strategy to improve awareness of the region in the appropriate institutions in order to mobilize intra-Caribbean support for the proposal, for reasons which include the consensus to the effect that the progress of the Caribbean Sea proposal will be facilitated if the ACS member States are encouraged to sign, ratify and accede to relevant legal instruments such as the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (Cartagena Convention) and its Protocols, as appropriate.

Lastly, it was agreed that ACS and ECLAC, with support from other bodies, will work on the preparation of an information document on the Caribbean Sea proposal, to be circulated to interested parties including the ACS member States,

global and regional bodies and other strategic partners. When the present document was prepared, the aforementioned information document was being completed by ACS and ECLAC, using the services of an international consultant.

The Association of Caribbean States and sustainable development in the Greater Caribbean

Meanwhile, the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) continues to function as the organization for consultation, cooperation and concerted action in the areas of trade, transport, sustainable tourism and natural disasters in the Greater Caribbean. In these areas there have been some noteworthy recent activities and accomplishments.

Transport

– Air transport

The Air Transport Agreement among the Member States and Associate Members of the Association of Caribbean States was approved at the ninth ordinary meeting of the Ministerial Council in November 2003 and opened for signature at the third extraordinary meeting of the Ministerial Council held in February 2004 in Panama City. At the latter meeting, the Agreement was signed by seven member countries of the Association, and others expressed their intention to sign in due course.

– Maritime transport

On the subject of maritime transport, the members of the Council of National Representatives of the Special Fund of the Association of Caribbean States, at their meeting on 24 November 2003 in Panama City, approved a project on implementation and operation of an integrated technological platform providing services to optimize logistic operations and transportation and facilitate regional and extraregional trade in the Greater Caribbean, on condition that the amount of the project should be adjusted to bring it into line with the parameters set in the Operational Regulation, that external financing for the project should be found and that it should not affect the budget of the Special Fund.

In February 2004, ACS signed a cooperation agreement with the International Maritime Organization and a memorandum of understanding with the Central American Commission on Maritime Transport (COCATRAM).

– Port and maritime database

In May 2004 ACS signed a letter of agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) concerning the implementation of the database project and involving an amount of US$ 150,000, which was to come from a trust fund set up by the Government of Italy and administered by IDB.

A. Trade development and external economic relations

– Obstacles to trade

The ACS secretariat disseminated widely the results of the study on obstacles to trade as instructed by the Special Committee on Trade Development and External Economic Relations.

– Study of the integration process in the Greater Caribbean

In consultation with ECLAC, the possibility is being considered of updating this study every year, incorporating the topic of regional competitiveness, with the aim of producing a document that will reflect the progress made in negotiations on trade agreements.

– Possibility of establishing a framework agreement to protect investment in the Greater Caribbean

An updated version of a matrix of bilateral agreements for reciprocal protection of investments was prepared and presented to the Special Committee on Trade Development and External Economic Relations, and it was decided that at the next intersessional preparatory meeting of the Ministerial Council the topic would be discussed and the possibility of an agreement at the level of the Greater Caribbean would be considered.

– Facilitation of customs formalities

The ACS secretariat has contacted the World Trade Organization secretariat and the regional office of the Automated System for Customs Data (AUSYCDA) developed by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) concerning the possibility of receiving technical assistance on this topic. It has also contacted the Permanent Secretariat of the General Treaty on Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) to explore the possibility of receiving technical cooperation in the matter from that source as well.

– Integrated information system for the Greater Caribbean

ACS is in the process of selecting a consultant to prepare a proposal for the financing and development of an economic and trade information module. In addition, it has made progress on investigating the possibility of developing a virtual market for the Greater Caribbean; in that regard, a revised version of the proposal has been prepared for consideration by the Special Committee on Trade at its next meeting.

– Update of ACS trade statistics

The ACS secretariat completed its most recent update of statistics in December 2003, and they can be found on the ACS web site.

– Inventory of trade studies

The ACS secretariat recently updated the inventory of trade studies, and the information can be found on the ACS web site.

– Business Forum of the Greater Caribbean

The guidelines for the holding of the Business Forum of the Greater Caribbean were again revised and approved by the Special Committee on Trade at its most

recent meeting. The ACS secretariat is in regular contact with the organizers of the Forum, which is to be held next in the Dominican Republic. The first steps have been taken on the process of signing a memorandum of understanding with the host country and organizing the necessary coordination.

– Facilitation of training in international trade negotiations

The ACS secretariat has maintained regular contact with the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American Integration System (LAES) with a view to bringing up to date the activities that are being carried out to train international trade negotiators at the Greater Caribbean level. In addition, the secretariat is currently looking for sources of cooperation to make it possible to hold seminar-workshops to provide training on international trade negotiations.

– Mutual cooperation agreement

The Republic of Panama signed the instrument of accession to the Agreement for Reciprocal Cooperation among Trade and Investment Promotion Organizations of the Member States and Associate Members of the Association of Caribbean States, joining the eight countries that signed the instrument in June 2003 at the fourth Forum of Trade Promotion Organizations.

Sustainable tourism

– Convention Establishing the Sustainable Tourism Zone of the Caribbean

To date the depositary country has received ratifications from three countries: France, Granada and Mexico; in addition, Cuba, Panama and Venezuela have informed the ACS secretariat that they have completed their domestic ratification procedures. The remaining ACS member States and associate members are taking steps to fulfil their political commitment to ratify the Convention.

The Protocol amending the Convention, which was considered and approved at the meeting of the High-Level Group held on 22 October 2003 in Port of Spain, was opened for signature by States on 12 February 2004 at the close of the third extraordinary meeting of the Ministerial Council held in Panama City. On that occasion the document was signed by seven countries: Barbados, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Suriname.

Among the actions proposed by the ACS secretariat and the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism are some directed at coordinating and facilitating the signing of these two legal instruments.

– Project on the development of sustainability indicators

Under the mandate given by the ninth meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism, the services of a consulting firm were contracted to prepare manuals for trainers and technicians. The first training manual was completed in February 2004 and submitted to the World Tourism Organization for evaluation, as previously agreed. The World Tourism Organization approved the manual, and it was submitted to the twelfth meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism held on 27 April 2004 in Havana.

The second training manual for technicians was completed for submission at the fifth meeting of the Group of Experts on Sustainable Tourism Indicators, to be held at ACS secretariat headquarters on 15 and 16 June 2004 to approve both

manuals. As part of the agreements reached at the tenth and eleventh meetings of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism, the first regional workshop for the Greater Caribbean is being organized in coordination with the World Tourism Organization, to take place possibly towards the end of the year in Trinidad and Tobago. The event would also be attended by other relevant international organizations with which ACS has worked closely, such as the Caribbean Tourism Organization, the Caribbean Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre, the Central American Integration System.

The procedural manuals are to be presented and an analysis of a selected tourist site is planned as a decisive step towards the realization of a sustainable tourism zone in the Caribbean.

– **Training in foreign languages**

This project is in the second phase of implementation; the first phase was successfully completed in October 2003. It is directed towards the elimination of language barriers in French and Spanish for the six countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

At the start of the second phase, a consultant was hired to do a feasibility study, which would conceptualize and analyse the key elements of the project, covering three languages and all ACS member States and associate members. The French Embassy in Trinidad and Tobago contributed 7,000 euros to fund the feasibility study. It should be completed by the end of July 2004 and ready for review by the financing and potential executing institutions so that the project can be given its final shape.

– **Forum of airline and tourism executives for the promotion of multi-destination tourism in ACS countries**

On 2 December 2003, a meeting of the second Advisory Committee for the project was held at the Regional Council of Martinique with excellent results. Representatives of airline executives, hotel and tour operators, specialized agencies, tourism executives and others attended. Key questions raised in the report of the consultant were discussed, and it was agreed that the latter's contract should be extended with the task of making specific proposals on multi-destination packages in the Greater Caribbean to be presented at the forum.

– **Visitor safety project**

ACS plans to work to support initiatives for the establishment of a regional visitor safety network and to expand links with other international organizations and other countries with a view to presenting a proposed plan of action at the twelfth meeting of the Special Committee on Sustainable Tourism.

Natural disasters

– **Building codes of the Greater Caribbean for winds and earthquakes**

ACS executed a project entitled "Updating building codes of the Greater Caribbean for winds and earthquakes (phase I)"; the results were recorded on CD-ROM and posted on the Internet. ACS received a non-reimbursable technical cooperation contribution in the amount of US$ 150,000.00 through an Italian trust fund administered by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). In September

2003, the final project report was submitted to IDB; the bank then responded to ACS, approving the report and commending ACS for the detail contained in it.

The principal objective of the project was to reduce and mitigate the damages caused by natural hazards such as hurricanes and earthquakes to the population and to small buildings by producing and disseminating an updated and comprehensive set of regional codes and standards for wind and earthquake loads as well as recommendations for the updating of existing codes, in order to develop better construction practices and techniques for the building of safe and reliable small buildings in ACS member countries. Further information, including a large portion of the codes document, can be found on the ACS web site: www.acs-aec.org.

At its sixth meeting held in June 2003 in Mexico City the Special Committee on Natural Disasters recommended that the second phase of the project should be evaluated on the basis of the outcome of analysis and discussion at the national level on building codes of the Greater Caribbean for winds and earthquakes and the outcome of the Consensus Conference on Technical Building Standards in the Caribbean.

It was also recommended that ACS member States and associate members should send the CD-ROMs to their national agencies with responsibility in that area for analysis and discussion.

– Creation of a post-disaster fund

The results and final output (CD-ROM) of the project entitled "Database of post-disaster financial mechanisms" were submitted at the eighth meeting of the Special Committee on Natural Disasters in May 2004. In January 2004, a donation of US$ 24,000.00 was received from the United Kingdom to support the holding of workshops on the creation of national post-disaster funds.

The ACS secretariat signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on 12 February 2004 in Panama City and with the Caribbean Disasters Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) on 27 February 2004 at the secretariat's headquarters in Port of Spain.